

Take cooking to whole new level

From England to China, women are taking cookery out of the kitchen and into the public domain. What's more, La Femme readers can win delectable cookery books today as well. Do contact us with your foodie news: lafemme@avusa.co.za

CookSister! wins best SA food blog

La Femme Correspondent
LONDON

A FORMER Port Elizabeth food fanatic has won the Best South African Food and Wine Blog award, as well as the Best South African Overseas Blog, in the fourth South African Blog Awards.

Jeanne Horak-Druiff, who has run the blog CookSister! (www.cooksister.com) for the past four years, sees her weblog (or blog) as a cross between the personal nature of a diary and the public nature of the internet.

And it's not the first time that 30-something Jeanne has scored, as she also won this category in 2005 and 2006, and was runner-up in 2007.

Although based in London, Jeanne remains a South African in her heart – and in her stomach as seen in recipes last month focusing on dried apricots and other "local is lekker" ingredients.

"I'm a born and bred, dyed-in-the-wool PE girl," she says, having gone to school at Collegiate before studying law at UPE and then lecturing at the then Technikon.

Jeanne e-mailed La Femme a few of her childhood foodie memories, revealing a nostalgically long list of restaurants that have either closed, or moved. Landmarks such as the Red Windmill, La Fontaine, the Wimpy in Walmer (where Preston's liquor store now is), Maverick Spur, Cranzgots, Cadillac Jack's, Rome (when it was just

off Russel Road), Jug & Mug, El Cid; Pizza Inn and the Casbah were among them.

Strangely enough, says Jeanne, "I was never much into cooking as a child or teenager."

"Apart from the odd kitchen-destroying batch of toffee apples, my mum's scone recipe was the only thing I made with regularity and huge success."

It was only when she started going away for weekends with university friends that she discovered her culinary talents and her interest grew from there.

But it was a move to London in 2000 that really set the ball rolling, as suddenly there was a whole new world of food to discover in arguably the most cosmopolitan city in the world.

"I was very good about writing home about all the restaurants I'd experienced and all the foods I discovered on trips to Europe, and my friends would always say that my letters were terrible for their diets because the descriptions only made them hungrier!"

By 2004, Jeanne had been introduced to the world of weblogs, and a whole new world of writing opened up before her, a world not populated by best-selling authors making up stories but by ordinary, real people with a passion for documenting and sharing some aspect of their lives.

"Some of them were truly awful, along the lines of 'I got up this morning and fed my hamster. I cried while brushing my teeth because my boyfriend left me. Then I had Weetabix for breakfast'. However, others were fantastic, detailing travels, photography projects, political commentary – and cookery exploits. Jeanne took



HOME GROWN ... London-based food blogger Jeanne Horak-Druiff whipped up a batch of muffins this past weekend.

part in the inaugural South African Blog Awards in 2005 and scooped Best South African Food Blog.

"I told my dad I'd won and he said 'that's wonderful, I'm so proud of you, and what is this blog thing you keep talking about?' People just didn't know what blogs were or why on earth you'd start one."

Her father, retired radiologist Johan still lives in Walmer, as does her brother Anton and his family, and Jeanne visits every year.

But running a food blog is not all fun and games.

"Because CookSister! is not my day job, I never seem to have enough time to develop it as far as I'd like. It can be quite time-consuming writing a good post and taking a set of great photos to go with it, and there often are simply not enough hours in the day."

Jeanne also feels quite strongly that having a public platform brings with it the

duty to use that platform to promote causes in which she believes.

For this reason, she was a UK host of the Menu for Hope fundraising campaign in December which raised over \$80 000 (R630 000) for a school feeding scheme in Lesotho, and has always been happy to promote charity events with a foodie element. To foster a greater sense of community among South African food and wine bloggers, she has also recently started the South African Food and Wine Blogger Directory, which she hopes will put more South African bloggers in touch with each other and raise the profile of SA foodies globally.

Jeanne's husband, Nick, is from Cape Town and despite having travelled and eaten far and wide, many of the stories on CookSister hark back to her time living in Port Elizabeth, making this a real home-grown gourmet fairy tale.

Female star whips up a feast

Gillian McAinsh
LA FEMME EDITOR

AS a co-claim to half a do. However, charming of their! tual Spo

Wendy Yang is one of very Japanese men are more the. The 22-year-old arrived with China in 2005, moving to Po also works in the sushi but number of restaurants which to be the flavour of the month.

Although sushi is traditional, Wendy said many Chinese. After all, rice is one of the along with vegetables and raw.

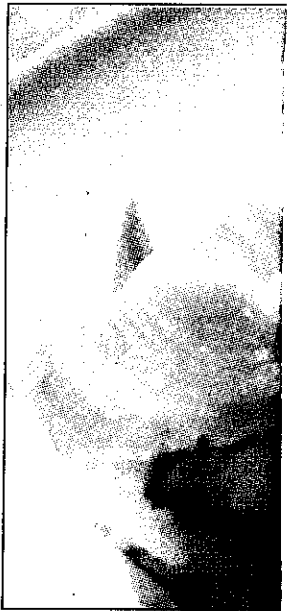
"In my country my people and tuna as you do here but loves seafood. "We also put are still alive, the prawns dried the prawns, raw. The taste is

Port Elizabeth patrons neglecting seafood but Wendy said their food as fresh as possible living when diners order from.

She said customers may quail, bred in captivity, and would like to eat while it is still.

"At the Spring Festival, Year, we cook a whole fish, and chicken dishes."

She also loves rice porridge.



RICE DELIGHTS ... This is

Much more

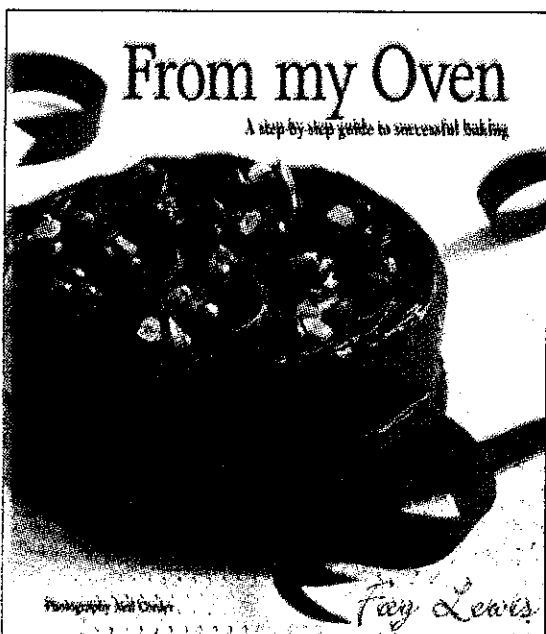
JUST what is sushi?

Here in South Africa the common misconception sushi is raw fish. However, the correct term for raw fish in a sushi bar is "sashimi".

In Japanese cuisine, the sophisticated dish of rice with rice vinegar, topped with fresh ingredients, which may or may not include fish. It itself may be cooked or raw.

Six award-winning SA cook books up for grabs

WIN



LA FEMME readers can win three copies of a pair of award-winning South African cookery books.

Struik Publishers' titles *Zhooszsh* and *From My Oven* clinched major accolades at the 2007 Gourmand Awards in the search for the Best in the World cookbooks. Also known as the Oscars for food and wine books, the Gourmand Awards serve to reward and honour those who "cook with words". The event was held at the Olympia Theatre in London.

Zhooszsh, by celebrity Gauteng couple Jeremy and Jacqui Mansfield, and *From My Oven*, by Fay Lewis, each came third in the Best Cookbook in the World and the Best in the World for Desserts and Baking categories, respectively.

To enter, e-mail lafemme@avusa.co.za, with *Zhooszsh From My Oven* in the subject field.

Please note that we accept only one entry per reader. Entries close at noon on Wednesday, June 18, and the winners will be notified shortly thereafter. Three readers will each win a copy of both titles.

